

OCT 20 1997

THE BAPTIST

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Promise Keepers make history with rally

WASHINGTON (ABP) — In the largest religious gathering in American history, an estimated 500,000 to 1 million Christian men gathered on the national mall Oct. 4 to confess sins of impurity, ungodliness, family neglect, racism, and sectarian strife.

Men from across the nation and representing every Christian denomination imaginable crowded onto the mall to participate in the "Stand in the Gap" assembly, sponsored by Promise Keepers, a national evangelical men's movement.

A sea of men that spread 300 yards wide filled the mile-long lawn from the U.S. Capitol to the Washington Monument. Loudspeakers and huge video screens were set up in 12 locations on the mall. The event also was telecast live on the C-SPAN cable network.

Neither Promise Keepers officials nor the U.S. National Park Service attempted to estimate the size of the crowd, due mainly to controversies over estimates of other events held on the mall in the past. Professional estimates placed the crowd at anywhere from 500,000 to 1 million.

Two things local observers agreed on were that the "Stand in the Gap" rally ranks as one of the two or three largest events of any kind ever held on the mall and that participants outnumbered the huge turnout for the 1995 Million Man March.

Because of its size and scope,

the Promise Keepers' first national meeting already is eliciting comparisons to the two national revival movements that swept parts of the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries. Plans announced at the end of the Washington meeting are intended to ensure the Promise Keepers movement continues to spread — both into local communities and across the globe.

Calling men to become more responsible in their families, churches, and communities was a recurring theme of the six-hour event, billed as a "sacred assembly of men."

The program was structured around three areas: A call for men to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as Savior, a call for men to respond to God by becoming more actively involved in their homes and churches, and a call for men to extend the hope of Christ to others.

The bulk of the program focused on the need for men to repent and become spiritually responsible. Speakers focused on three areas of spiritual failure:

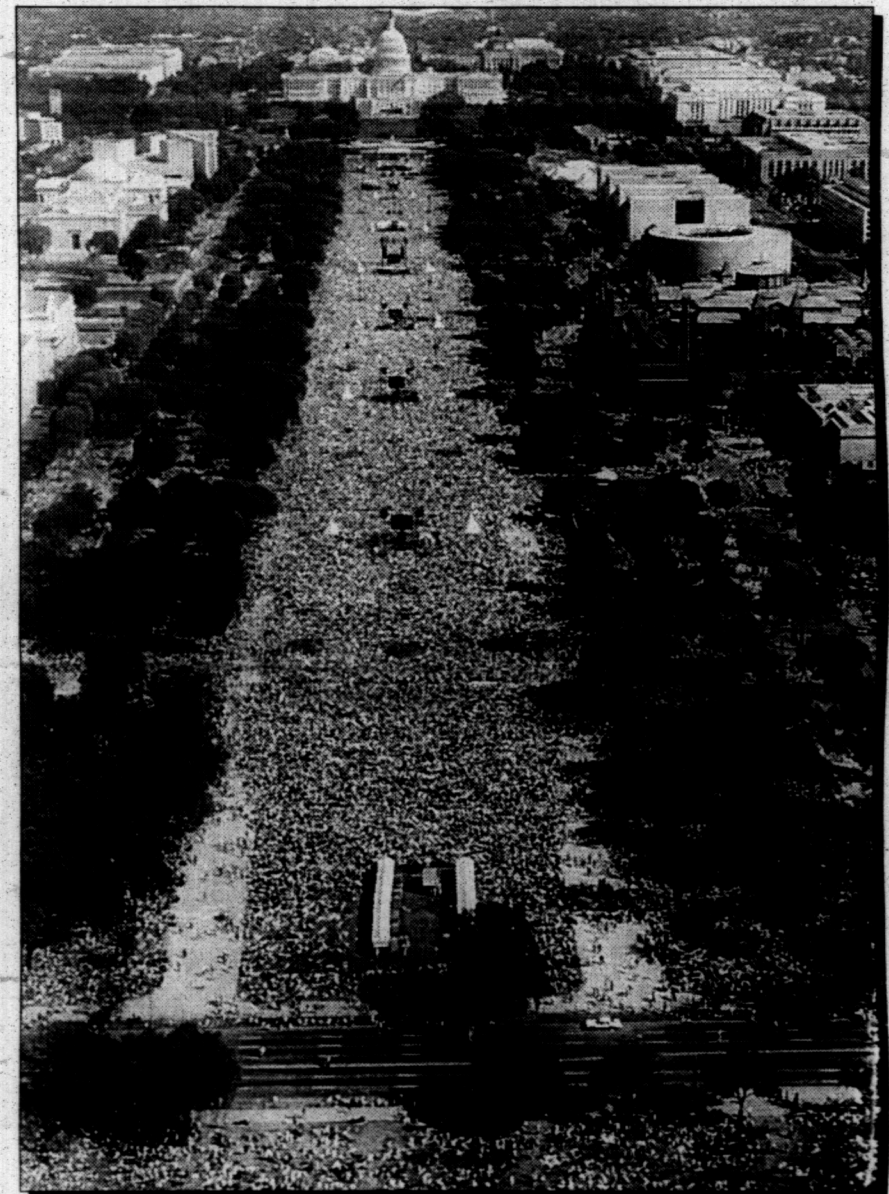
- ◆ Forsaking God by disregarding the Bible, failing in prayer, and falling into sexual sins.

- ◆ Evading spiritual leadership by abusing and abandoning their families.

- ◆ Fostering disunity in the body of Christ through racism and denominational pride.

After brief messages on each of the three topics, a time for confession of sins followed,

then a joint declaration of the men's desire to serve God and their families more faithfully.



KEEPING PROMISES — The Oct. 4 "Stand in the Gap" rally, which attracted between 500,000 and 1 million men to the Washington Mall, was likely the largest religious meeting in the history of America. (ABP photo by Greg Warner)

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Public Affairs Committee votes 8-4 to suggest the SBC sever ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based church-state agency made up of nine Baptist bodies.

#### 20 years ago

Baptist Student Union (BSU) students present MBCB Student Work director Ralph Winders and wife Ginny with a trip to the 9th World Baptist Youth Congress in Manila, plus a trip around the world, at the annual student convention in Columbus.

#### 50 years ago

U.S. President Harry Truman praises church papers, saying they "fill a need not met in our secular press." Truman endorses Church Press Month, to be observed in October under the auspices of Associated Church Press, an organization of Protestant editors.

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### PK — by the numbers

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Here's a summary of the "Stand in the Gap" rally Oct. 4 in Washington, D.C.:

- ◆ Professional estimates ranged from 480,000 to 1 million in attendance. The Million Man March in 1995 drew 400,000 to 800,000. Two earlier meetings claim a million or more — the 1965 inauguration of Lyndon Johnson (1.2 million) and the 1976 U.S. bicentennial (1 million). Experts consider those estimates to be inflated.

- ◆ The average Promise Keeper is a middle-aged, middle-income, married (88%), white (80%) male, according to a Washington Post poll. He is likely a Republican (46%) and considers himself conservative (61%), but he prefers that Promise Keepers not play a political role.

- ◆ The Washington rally cost almost \$10 million. Admission was free, but organizers expect to recoup most of the expense through an offering that was taken at the close of the event. Promise Keepers estimates its 1997 net revenue at \$70 million.

- ◆ A third (32%) came primarily to confess their sins to God and a fourth (25%) came to show unity with other Christian men, according to a Washington Post poll. Others came to make a change in their lives (14%), support their family (10%) or show support for Promise Keepers' values (9%).



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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## First things first

**I**t was quite a sight. Hundreds of thousands of Promise Keepers — some estimates range as high as one million — gathered in front of the United States Capitol to celebrate the unique roles and responsibilities the Creator gave them in his incredible plan for this world.

Mississippi was well represented, with thousands of men taking planes, trains, and roadways to get to Washington in time for the rally.

C-SPAN network's all-day, unvarnished coverage provided a detailed picture of why all those men were in such a rush to get to the city by the Potomac.

Present were an almost uncountable number of men who openly carried their Bibles and their faith into a town that often seems to exist in a spiritual vacuum, where open displays of Christianity are considered almost shameful.

Many came to invest in the idea that men should daily reflect a commitment of love to wife and family transcended only by love of God. Some came in need of the cathartic experience only Jesus can provide when we know we have sinned.

Still others undoubtedly came seeking the Savior for the first time, among those who had found the peace only he can bring.

Although the movement's leaders and the vast majority of its members are determined to avoid any taint of secular politics, our elected leaders would be wise to note the foundation principles claimed by Promise Keepers and the many other growing Christian organizations banding together at virtually all levels for transracial, cross-denominational worship and praise of the Savior.

If Mississippi Baptist men (or women or both) want to be involved in para-church organizations like Promise Keepers, that's

certainly their right. Priesthood of the Believer remains a strongly-held belief among Southern Baptists, which in this context means that individuals can make up their own minds and hearts about such matters after praying for guidance and then following God's lead.

However, one of the basic tenets of any legitimate para-church organization is the idea that involvement in the organization should not divert an individual's contributions of time, talent, and treasure from his/her local church.

Promise Keepers, for one, has included such an admonishment at the foundation of their program, encouraging followers to think first of their local church needs and then get involved in Promise Keepers only after those needs have been met.

That's the way it should be, but that's not what's happening in some Mississippi churches and, one suspects, in other Southern Baptist churches in other states.

Disturbing reports are beginning to filter in regarding Mississippi churches that have had to cancel for the remainder of the church year such programs as Royal Ambassadors (RAs), because adult male leaders have not stepped forward.

In at least one church in our state, that situation has been worsened by the fact that Promise Keepers men have scheduled their accountability meeting at the same time RAs would be taught — if only enough adult male leaders could be found.

That's not what Promise Keepers is about, and the group's national leaders would be mortified to know such a thing is going on in Mississippi. They have preached long and hard against it.

The fault lies within us, the sad legacy of

**"I'M SO HAPPY YOU AREN'T EMBARRASSED TO BE SEEN CARRYING A BIBLE—YOU KNOW, LIKE MEN!"**



decades of turning away — and in many cases being led away — from service to our churches, associations, state conventions, and national denomination in favor of para-church groups.

Too many of our most prominent Southern Baptist churches and leaders have chosen that route for too many years, and we are certain to reap a bitter harvest in our local churches because of it.

Let's keep first things first. Our local church work is just too important to overlook.

Sometimes it seems as if Southern Baptists are the only ones who don't realize that fact.

## GUEST OPINION:



**"Now concerning the collection..."**

By David Michel, Director  
MBCB Stewardship Department



are made real only when they are underwritten with our money.

Paul writes to the Corinthians because they are reluctant to participate in the offering that he is collecting. He challenges them to prove their love for Christ by giving a generous offering.

He shames them by referring to the Macedonians who had pleaded for an opportunity to

participate, even though they were living in poverty compared to the Corinthians.

He exhorts them to realize that the service they offer through their giving, results in praise and glory to God. It would be profitable for us to reread II Cor. 8-9.

In a day when conventions, churches, and individuals are considering a retreat from our cooperative work together as

Southern Baptists, we should not forget the model and exhortation of the Apostle Paul.

October is designated as Cooperative Program Emphasis Month all across our convention.

What better time to reflect on how Southern Baptists have made their love for missions effective through sacrificial giving? What better time to renew our agreements for future working relationships?

Use this month to inform yourself and your church about what CP ministries accomplish. View the most recent video-magazine, *Vessels*, available from your associational director of missions or Broadcast Services at the Baptist Building (800) 748-1651.

Encourage your church to increase its gifts through the CP in next year's budget.

By doing these things we may discover the same surprise that the Apostle Paul did in the first century. He writes about the Macedonians:

"They did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping God's will." (II Cor. 8:5)

Could it be that the secret to spiritual renewal and more genuine fellowship is greater Cooperative Program giving?



# MBC messengers to gather Oct. 28-29

By Tim Nicholas  
MBCB Communication Director

The 162nd annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) will take place Oct. 28-29 at First Church, Jackson, with a four-session agenda of Bible study, praise, and the business of deciding how best to cooperate to win Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

"Follow Christ's Servant Example," is the theme of this year's program, the business portion of which will include consideration of a \$25 million Cooperative Program budget, election of a new president, and discussion of virtually any spiritually-related topic messengers deem important.

Jimmy Porter, pastor of First Church, McComb, is outgoing president, having



Porter



Young

served the traditional maximum two-year term. He will deliver the president's address during the first convention session which begins at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 28.

Jerry Young will preach the second message of the first session. Young is pastor of New Hope Church, Jackson, and founder and headmaster of New Hope Christian School.

The afternoon session will feature the convention sermon by Jim Futral, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson. The preacher for the annual sermon is elected by messengers based on the MBC Time, Place, and Preacher Committee's recommendation.

On the evening of Oct. 28, Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



Futral



Causey

(MBCB), will preach his annual message.

The fourth and final session on Oct. 29—a continuation of the drop from five sessions last year—will feature a message by Chuck Kelley Jr., president of New Orleans Seminary. The convention concludes at 11:35 a.m. on Oct. 29.

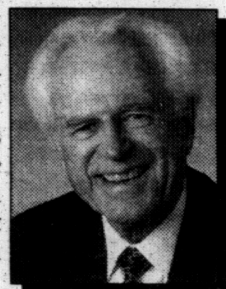
Stephen Olford, radio preacher, author, and former Baptist pastor, will deliver the Bible Treasure messages during the first, second, and fourth session.

In addition, each session will offer a short testimony on following Christ in the marketplace.

Rebecca Grace, youth speakers tournament winner from First Church, New Albany, will give her winning message on following Christ in the classroom, during the Oct. 28 morning session.



Kelley



Olford

Melissa Courtney, second place speakers tournament winner from First Church, Madison, will speak during the second session on following Christ on campus.

The Tuesday evening lay testimony will be from Ronnie Musgrove, Mississippi's Lieutenant Governor and a deacon in First Church, Batesville. His topic is following Christ in the workplace.

Alton Forrester, a lay leader from Fairview Church, Columbus, will speak on following Christ in retirement, during the closing session of the convention.

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Music will be provided by the sanctuary choirs of First Church, McComb, and Broadmoor Church, Jackson, and by the Mississippi Singing Churchmen and the Blue Mountain College choir.

Organist will be Glenn Crosthwait; pianist will be Eva Hart.

Other MBC officers are David Raddin, pastor of First Church, Yazoo City - 1st vice president; Martin Hayden, pastor of Liberty Church, Liberty - 2nd vice president; J. W. Brister of Madison, retired director of missions - recording secretary; and Gus Merritt of Newton, retired pastor - associate recording secretary.



Crosthwait



Hart

## Pastors' Conference slated for Oct. 27

The 1997 Mississippi Baptist Pastor's Conference will take place in the sanctuary of First Church, Jackson, on Oct. 27, and will feature a trio of Mississippi preachers along with three Southern Baptist leaders.

The program begins at 1 p.m. and concludes at 9:05 p.m.

The three Mississippians are Harvey Reeves, Terry Ledbetter, and Steve Bennett.

Reeves is a full-time evangelist from Aberdeen and staff evangelist for Wheeler Groove Church, Corinth.

Ledbetter is pastor of Union Church, Picayune, and Bennett is pastor of Colonial Hills Church, Southaven.

The three out-of-staters are Albert Mohler, Morris Chapman, and Tom Eliff.

Mohler is president of Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Chapman is a Kosciusko native serving as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee; and

Eliff is pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla., and president of the SBC.

Music will be provided by Ray Bennett, associate pastor of Wheeler Grove Church; James Lewis, pastor of First Church, New Albany; Mary Johnson, a member of Rienzi Church, Rienzi; The Hoppers, a Southern Gospel family quartet from Madisonville, N.C.; Dexter Benjamin and Dean Lawrence, co-ministers of music at Wheeler Grove Church; the sanctuary choir of Wheeler Grove Church; and the Heismen, a men's quarter from Wheeler Grove Church.

Kara Blackard, pastor of Wheeler Grove Church, is the current president of the pastor's conference.

Tom Atwood, pastor of First Church, Oxford, is president-elect. Edward Knox, pastor of Antioch Church, Columbus, was appointed secretary-treasurer of the conference.

The pastor's conference raises its own funds by love offerings during sessions.

## Miss. CP continues rise

Mississippi Baptists in September gave \$726,866 more in gifts to the state Cooperative Program (CP) than they did the previous September, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), which disburses the funds.

September 1997 gifts totaled \$2,321,142, while September 1996 gifts were \$1,594,276. CP gifts thus far in 1997 total \$19,528,849 — \$1,373,345 more than that given in the same period of 1996.

In addition, the 1997 CP budget of \$24,145,086, adopted by MBCB members last year, calls for \$18,108,815 through end of September, but gifts are \$1,420,034 (7.84%) ahead of the established budget figure.

CP gifts help fund such events as the Mississippi Baptist Conference of the Deaf at Clinton's Camp Garaywa on Oct. 10-12 and the Winter Bible Study Preview at First Church, Jackson, on Oct. 14.

## SBC closes record year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ended the 1996-97 fiscal year with record Cooperative Program (CP) gifts, more than \$155 million, surpassing last year's record by nearly \$7 million and the budget by nearly \$10 million, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For the SBC's fiscal year, Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, the \$155,005,723 total for 1996-97 is \$6,820,646, or 4.6%, above last year's record of \$148,185,076.

For the month of September, the CP total was \$13,512,684 compared to September 1996 of \$12,249,874, a difference of \$1,262,810, or 10.31%. Designated gifts for the month of September were \$2,448,693, or \$204,071 more than the \$2,244,622 in September 1996.

The September CP total also surpassed the monthly budget requirement of \$12,087,791 by \$1,424,893, or 11.79%.





# Mission Miss. to hold reconciliation rallies



Christian author and lecturer Josh McDowell will be the keynote speaker for the annual Mission Mississippi Celebration of Reconciliation in Christ rallies on Oct. 21-22 at Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson.

McDowell will bring his "Right From Wrong" tour to the Coliseum for Youth Night on Oct. 21, and for Unity Night on Oct. 22.

Both rallies begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free.

McDowell's recent book titles include:

- ◆ The Deceivers.
  - ◆ Under Seige.
  - ◆ The Love Killer.
  - ◆ Right From Wrong: What You Need to Know to Help Kids Make Right Choices.
  - ◆ The Truth Slayers.
  - ◆ 103 Questions Children Ask About Right From Wrong.
- McDowell will be joined on

Youth Night by Christian performing artist Fred Lynch and the touring band.

Lynch, gears Christian themes with contemporary music style, has just released his solo debut album, "Gimmie Tha Pleanet."

On Unity Night the following evening, the Mission Mississippi Mass Choir and Praise Team will perform before McDowell speaks. The Covenant of Racial Reconciliation in Christ will also be publicly unveiled for the first time.

Jarvis Ward, Mission Mississippi executive director, said the covenant was crafted over several months and is based on the Bible's commands to become one in the body of Christ.

"To date, over 60 area clergy have signed on to this covenant. They will be leading

their congregations to the Mississippi Coliseum.

"Thousands of black and white citizens will promise to: acknowledge anyone who claims Christ as Savior and Lord as their brother or sister regardless of race; earnestly ask God to reveal unbiblical attitudes they hold because of another person's race and repent of such attitudes; and work to overcome racial prejudice and encourage reconciliation efforts," Ward said.

Mission Mississippi also promotes a number of other activities to encourage reconciliation, including an annual picnic, weekly prayer meetings that rotate among predominantly black and white churches, and a number of other activities across the state.

For more information on the upcoming rallies and the Mission Mississippi ministry, contact the Mission Mississippi office at (601) 353-6477.

## Ministers' Wives to meet

The annual Conference of Mississippi Baptist Ministers' Wives takes place at First Church, Jackson, on Monday, Oct. 27, with two ministers' wives as speakers.

The program takes place 1-4:30 p.m. with two simultaneous sessions led by Jane Allison of Hattiesburg and Dolores Taylor of Gainesville, Fla.

Allison will speak on the

topic "Just Who Do You Think You Are?"

Taylor will speak on "Expectations: Great and Small."

The Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is conference sponsor.

Woman's Missionary Union of the MBCB will sponsor a fellowship break.



Allison



Taylor

## MBC update

New Orleans Seminary alumni luncheon, 12 noon, Tuesday, Oct. 28, First Church, Jackson. Chuck Kelley, speaker. Tickets are \$9 per person. Send check or money order payable to NOBTS Alumni Association to J. F. Sumner, Jr., 275 Watkins Rd., Moselle, MS 39459. Telephone: (601) 752-6625. Deadline for reservations extended to Oct. 20.

## Lay Missions Conference will feature missionaries

Experiencing God in the workplace is the overarching theme of the annual Mississippi Baptist Lay Missions Conference set for Oct. 27 at First Church, Jackson.

That theme is reflected in all three portions of the conference which begins with a series of special interest sessions at 1:30, continues at 3 p.m., with a general session, and concludes with a 5 p.m. banquet.

The 1:30 meetings are designed for those interested in mission activity in seven areas: agriculture,

camping, church renewal, construction, education, Partnership Missions, and Mission Service Corps.

Two of these groups have reported plans for their sessions; the agricultural and the educational missions groups.

The agricultural missions group will feature Vic and Sharon Johnston, missionaries to Teresina, Brazil, where they are involved with the state Baptist camp there.



Joe and Teri Metts



Johnston



Johnston

The educational missions group will hear Joe and Teri Metts, missionaries to the Dominican Republic where he has been interim director of the Dominican Baptist Seminary and she has taught English as a second language and served as mission prayer coordinator.

Mike Rogers, author and president of Kingdom Agenda Ministries, will be featured at the 3 p.m. general session.

His topic will be that of the title of his book, "The Kingdom Agenda: Experiencing God in Your Workplace."

The banquet, which requires reservations, begins at 5 p.m., with the food line opening at 4:30 p.m.

After dinner speakers include Howell W. Todd, president of Baptist affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

WorldCom founder Bernard Ebbers of Brookhaven, originally announced as one of the banquet speakers, will be unable to attend.

Banquet tickets are \$8 per person.

For more information and to make reservations for the banquet, contact the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Brotherhood Department at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Todd



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

Which parent is to blame when a child of divorce goes bad — the custodial mother or the non-custodial father?

When a child "goes bad," there can be many reasons. The trauma of divorce can be devastating. The feeling of abandonment can be harsh, and the adjustment can be difficult. However, the fact remains that your child has made personal choices as to how he will live his life. That holds true even in the best of family situations. Our sin nature is constantly at work within us. Only prayer and a focused relationship with Jesus Christ can give us the strength we need to withstand temptation. Parents do a disservice to their child when they accept responsibility for bad behavior, rather than allowing the child to suffer (and understand) the consequences of poor choices. Stop blaming yourself or allowing others to blame you for your child's conduct. Pray for forgiveness where you have gone wrong, and for the strength to be a Christian witness to your child. Pray constantly for your child's salvation.

I will have health problems for the rest of my life because of sins I have committed. Why is God punishing me so harshly?

There are powerful entities in nature that gain entry into our lives and bodies when we sin. It's unfortunate that our modern depictions of sin do not stress this fact. Your health problems are the natural consequence of sin. You can view your problems as divine punishment, but in reality they are the result of the sin nature against which every one of us continually struggles. It's true that God can remove your sin consequences if he decides to do so, but it's also true that he can help you adjust to your situation and learn from your mistakes in order to become a more obedient servant. The Apostle Paul was given a similar thorn in his flesh, but he used it as a reminder of God's grace in the midst of the great discouragements in his ministry (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Likewise, King David suffered greatly because of his sins; read Psalm 51 to understand how he dealt with the consequences.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



# Mississippians to staff IMB exhibit at MBC

A pair of Mississippi missionary couples will staff the International Mission Board (IMB) exhibit at the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) on Oct. 28-29 at First Church, Jackson.

Alvis K. (Ken) Cooper and his wife Martha McIlwain Cooper, along with Thomas E. (Tom) Hearon Jr. and his wife Bonnie Ernst Hearon, will be at the annual meeting to provide information about IMB ministries and programs around the world.

The Coopers are currently serving in Munich, Germany, where Ken is pastor of the English-language Munich International Baptist Church and Martha is a church/home worker.

The Hearons are currently serving in Niteroi, Brazil, where Tom is a student evange-

list and Bonnie is a church/home worker.

Ken Cooper was born in Saltillo. He holds degrees from Baptist-affiliated Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain; the University of Mississippi in Oxford, and New Orleans Seminary.

Prior to his missionary service, he pastored Calvary Church, Louisville; First Church, Potts Camp; Oak Hill Church, Pontotoc; and West Corinth Church, Corinth.

Martha Cooper was born in Starkville. She attended Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville and audited classes at New Orleans Seminary. She served as minister of youth at West Corinth Church, Corinth.

The Coopers, who have two adult children, transferred to

Germany in 1994 from the Middle East/North Africa region.

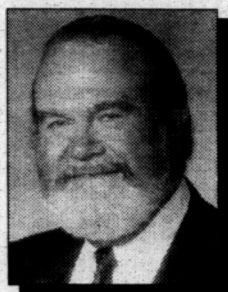
Tom Hearon was born in New Orleans and considers Jackson his hometown. He holds degrees from Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton and Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

Prior to his missionary service, he was Baptist Student Union (BSU) director at Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg; minister of music and youth at Twin Lakes Church, Jackson; Foreign Mission Board jour-

neyman in Argentina; and Home Mission Board summer missionary in Puerto Rico.

Bonnie Hearon was born in San Antonio, Texas. She holds degrees from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Texas, and Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. She previously served as associate BSU director at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

The Hearons, who have two children at home, transferred from language study in Campinas, Brazil, to their current assignment in Niteroi.



Cooper



Hearon



Cooper



Hearon

## MC instructor testifies before Congress panel

WASHINGTON (BP) — A Mississippi College instructor's testimony helped prompt legislation that has been introduced in both houses of Congress to prevent creditors from being able to seize money given to churches and charities by people who have filed for bankruptcy.

The bills are designed to counter a series of recent rulings ordering churches to surrender tithes contributed by members who later filed for bankruptcy.

The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act would amend federal law to:

- ◆ prohibit a federal bankruptcy judge from forcing a church or charity to return past gifts of as much as 15% of the bankrupt person's gross income.

It would protect a larger percentage if the debtor has demonstrated a pattern of contributing more than 15%.

- ◆ allow a person who has filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy to include tax-exempt contributions of as much as 15% of his gross income in a budget for debt repayment.

The law now permits a person who has filed for bankruptcy to budget moderately for entertainment, but increasingly courts have ruled a debtor may not budget money for a tithe to a church, because such giving does not provide a "reasonably equivalent value."

"This is an obvious assault on the freedom of religion," Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) said from the Senate floor in introducing the bill Oct. 1. "Would our founding fathers have wanted a federal judge to tell a citizen that he's not allowed to tithe to his church? Obviously not."

Meanwhile, a growing number of churches are seeking relief in the wake of the Supreme Court's June opinion striking down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) on at least the state and local levels.

In the first such bankruptcy case to reach a federal appeals court, the Eighth Circuit ruled in 1996 that RFRA protected the Crystal Evangelical Free Church

of Minneapolis from having to return the tithes of a member who had filed for bankruptcy.

After its RFRA decision, however, the Supreme Court returned the case to the Eighth Circuit for rehearing.

Churches in Colo., Conn., Idaho, Kansas, Ken., Ore., Pennsylvania, and Texas have faced actions by federal bankruptcy trustees in recent years, according to the Christian Legal Society. These include at least three Southern Baptist churches.

In a Sept. 22 hearing before a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Stephen Gould, pastor of Crystal Evangelical Free Church, said the church has spent about \$280,000 in defending itself.

In his written testimony, Gould told the subcommittee the current trend would result in "the wholesale deprivation of the rights of any devout religious believers who find themselves in bankruptcy and could in many cases seriously disrupt the budgets and programs of churches."

Two law professors and a representative from the Christian Legal Society endorsed the legislation.

Todd Zywicki, assistant professor of law at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College School of Law in Jackson, said in written testimony, "Focusing on the receipt of an economic benefit in exchange for the contribution ignores the fact that the contributions are animated by a spirit of religious and ethical obligation."

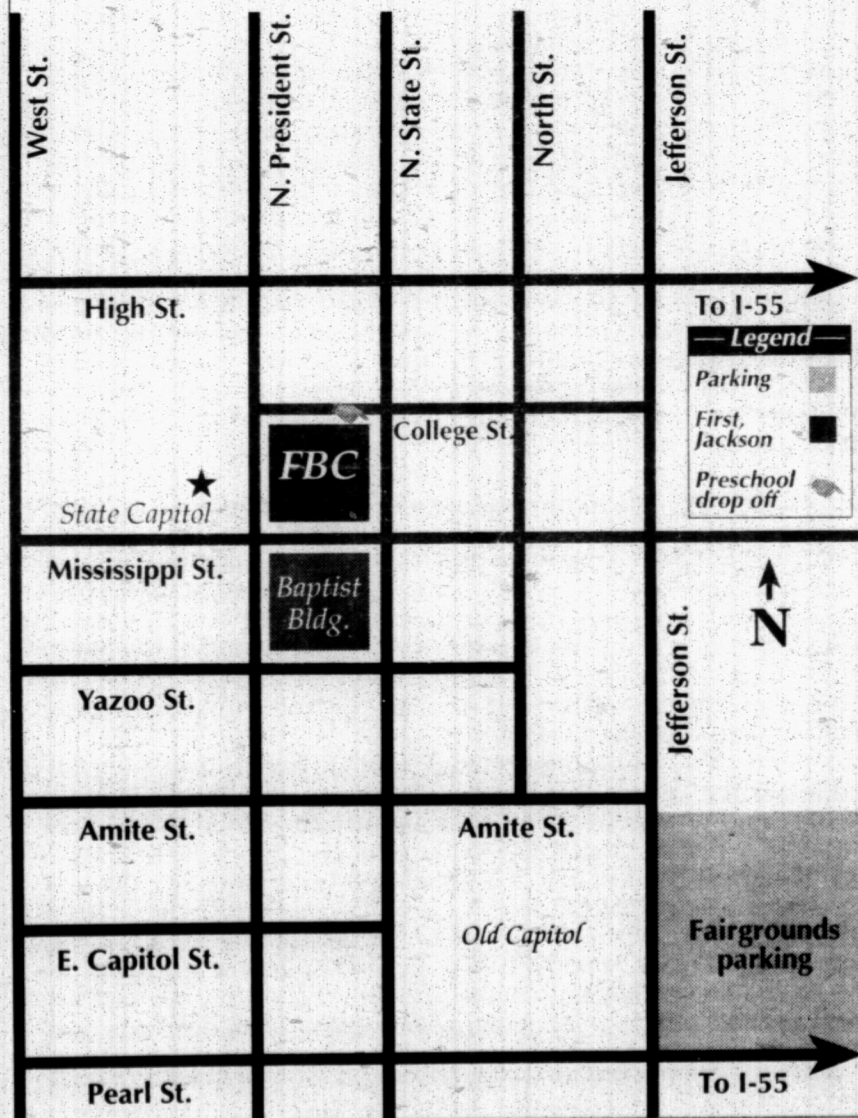
Indeed, it is this very absence of selfish motives which makes the contributions praiseworthy. Although unquestionably consistent with the bankruptcy code, the current approach slights these noble impulses and sacrifices them to the parochial interests of the bankruptcy code."



Prof. Todd Zywicki

TESTIMONY — Mississippi College School of Law assistant professor Todd Zywicki testifies Sept. 22 before a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 22 in Washington D. C. (BR special photo by Tom Strode)

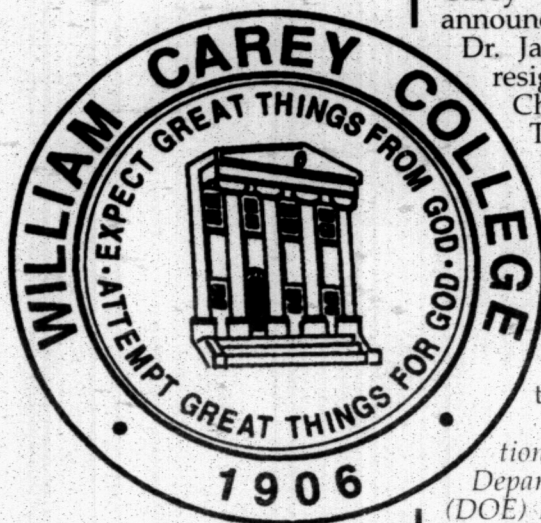
## 1997 MBC annual meeting First Church, Jackson





# WCC trustees release public statement

Oct. 6, 1997 Statement  
William Carey College  
Board of Trustees  
Ben Carlisle, Chairman



The trustees of William Carey College (WCC) announced that effective Oct. 6, Dr. James W. Edwards has resigned as Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer. This action follows earlier action that had placed Edwards on administrative leave on Sept. 17.

Both of the above actions follow an announcement by the U.S. Attorney's office that:

"A two-year investigation by the (federal) Department of Education (DOE) Inspector General's Office revealed that in May of 1994, James W. Edwards, then WCC President, falsely represented on behalf of the College as part of the College's written federal grant application, that the College's academic programs and services were annually assessed and developed by a 'Long Range Planning Committee' which created a 'Long Range Strategic Plan' which was updated annually 'with input from all segments of the College community.' The written representations made to the Government by WCC also represented that the governance of the College included a 'Management and Student Information Task Force' made up of specified members, and that a 'Faculty Development Committee' with named members had developed a strategy for faculty development on the WCC campuses.

"The government's investigation revealed that all such representations were false, in that no such committees or task forces in fact existed."

The Board of Trustees, upon learning of the DOE investigation two years ago, ordered an independent investigation of the Title III matter. Upon completion of the independent study, the board was assured that the accusations were overstated, and in fact were a "tempest in a teapot." The trustees accepted the study and its findings as complete and accurate. As the DOE investigation continued for several additional months, concern began to arise among the faculty, staff, and trustees.

The DOE investigation revealed that faculty and staff were listed as having served on committees which never existed at WCC. The board wants to emphasize that none of the faculty and staff listed in the DOE report, as having served on committees, committed any wrongdoing. When interviewed by the investigator for DOE, these persons were honest and forthright. We commend them for their action and integrity.

The press release from the

U.S. Attorney's office on Sept. 26 revealed publicly the seriousness of the situation at WCC. This news has been both disturbing and disruptive. The trustees want to thank each of you for your prayers, patience, and understanding as we have dealt with this very difficult situation.

WCC is an institution of higher learning, affiliated with and supported by the Mississippi Baptist Convention. We are committed to the highest level of integrity, honor, and responsibility. The trustees have moved as swiftly as possible to restore integrity and morale at the campuses of WCC. We regret that these events have happened. We regret and apologize for any action or inaction which may

have contributed to our present dilemma. The trustees insist on those persons employed by the institution being persons with the highest integrity. We have a fine faculty, staff, and student body. We want to commend those who have worked tirelessly to resolve this situation.

The announcement by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the settlement reached between WCC and DOE does not in any way reflect on the remaining faculty, staff, and student body. This settlement will not hinder nor impair our daily operations, nor our future relationship with DOE. We are eligible to apply for future institutional grants. Students will be able to apply for and continue to receive government grants for their studies. We do not antici-

pate any existing scholarships being cut for students at WCC.

We are taking additional steps to restore integrity and morale on the campuses. We will also continue to take action that will ensure WCC continues to operate on its three campuses, offering a quality education to its students.

Continue to pray for us as we make decisions concerning WCC. May our Father continue to bless each of you, along with the family of WCC.

The Board of Trustees also reaffirmed the decision naming Dr. Larry Kennedy (as) Chief Executive Officer. He was named interim President in June. The Board also named Academic Vice-President Dr. Cloyd Ezell as Chief Operating Officer.

## Virginia Baptist churches to begin 'unique' or 'dual' state affiliations

ROANOKE, Va. (BP) — In the first annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, (SBCV) 157 churches were approved for affiliation with the newest Southern Baptist-related state convention.

A total of 108 churches were received for "unique" affiliation and an additional 49 churches were received under "dual" affiliation during the SBC meeting, attended by 462 voting messengers Sept. 29 at Green Ridge Church, Roanoke.

Thomas Road Church in Lynchburg, pastored by Jerry Falwell, was among the 108 churches approved for unique affiliation, which means that a SBCV church has no relationship with the older Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). Dual affiliation signifies that a church has relationships with and contributes to both SBCV and the BGAV.

Resolutions passed during the SBCV meeting endorsed the Southern Baptist Convention boycott of The Disney Company; declared "it is unscriptural for women to serve as pastors or deacons;" and voiced "strong opposition to religious persecution" across the world.

Messengers approved an SBCV budget for the coming year of \$1.66 million, with 50% to be sent to Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program missions and ministries and 50% to be retained for SBCV causes. No budget items are taken out prior to the 50-50 SBC-SBCV allocation.

In Cooperative Program receipts for its 1996-97 year, SBCV has received more than \$1.8 million, compared to \$688,418 in 1995-96.

In addition to CP monies, in the first 11 months of the fiscal year the SBCV had received \$887,740 in designated gifts, with \$561,918 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions and \$238,873 for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions.

In missions involvement, SBCV undertook its first international project this summer by sending a 24-member team to Romania.

Terry Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, was re-elected unanimously to a second one-year term as president and Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Church, V Beach, was similarly re-elected as first vice president.

SBCV messengers met Sept. 16 of last year in Richmond and unanimously declared themselves a new Southern Baptist state convention. During the intervening 12 months, a 10-member

transition committee chaired by Burris had worked to "study the implications of (that decision), take the necessary action required immediately, and bring a report" to the September 1997 meeting.

Among recommendations from the transition committee and the SBCV executive committee approved by messengers:

- ◆ hiring of a missions coordinator to interface with the North American Mission Board in church planting; an education and church programs coordinator to interface with the SBC Sunday School Board; an evangelism assistant; and an administrative assistant. Until now, the new convention has had only one professional staff member, Executive Director/Treasurer Doyle Chauncey.

- ◆ moving SBCV offices from Virginia Beach to the more central Richmond area.

All votes at the meeting were either unanimous or nearly so, with one exception which dealt with one provision of the new constitution. As a fellowship, SBCV membership has been open to both churches and individuals. Forty-one individuals who are members of churches not aligned with the SBCV had donated monetary gifts and, under the previous constitution, were entitled to attend annual meetings and vote. The new constitution would not permit any new individual affiliations after Sept. 29, 1997, and provides that "individual affiliation shall expire October 1, 2000."

A number of messengers felt because existing individual members had been staunch supporters when the SBCV was new and struggling, though no new individual affiliations should be permitted, those already existing should continue until the individual's church joined the SBCV, the person moved membership to an SBCV church or out of state or the individual went home to heaven.

Opponents cited Baptist practice and suggested in the New Testament only churches took actions. After thorough discussion, a ballot vote produced 235 in favor of the Oct. 1, 2000, termination and 203 voted in favor of deleting the termination date.

Otherwise, other proposed changes in the SBCV constitution and bylaws were approved to reflect the change of the SBCV to a convention from a fellowship. In a report from the transition committee, messengers also were informed that the SBCV now has in place operating agreements with appropriate SBC entities.



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 16, 1997

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTERS' WIVES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1997

1:00-4:30 P.M.

- Inspiration, Fellowship, Personal Growth, Information, and Support for the Minister's Wife!
- There is no cost for this conference.
- Child care will be available for preschoolers on a limited basis.

### Program Personnel



**Dolores Taylor**



**Jane Allison**

For more information, contact the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800 in Jackson.

(cut along dotted line)

### Registration Form

Complete the registration form and return to Julius C. Thompson, Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Association \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

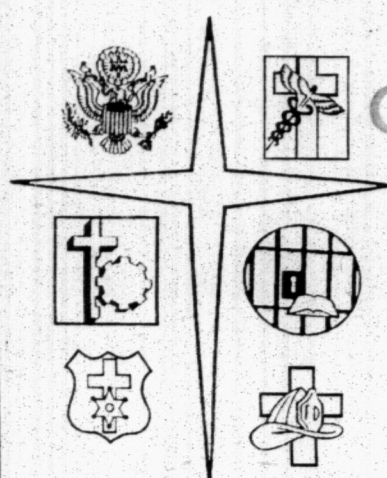
Husband's Position \_\_\_\_\_

Names and birth dates of children you will bring \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Mississippi Baptist Chaplains Association

Annual Fall Banquet

Tuesday, October 28, 1997  
Baptist Building – Skyroom  
4:45 p.m.

### SPEAKER

Joe Bob Mizzell

Alabama Baptist State Convention  
Assistant to the executive secretary

and director of Christian Life, Public Affairs and Chaplaincy



### MUSIC

Cathy Taylor, support staff of Woman's Missionary Union, MBCB, and a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Jackson, where her husband is pastor

For more information or to make reservations, contact Elaine Smith, Missions Extension and Associational Administration Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at 601/968-3800 or toll-free at 800/748-1651.

## 1998 State Singles Retreat

*"Celebrating the Single's Journey"*

May 23-25

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Conference Highlights

Saturday, May 23

Kick-off rally at 4 p.m. featuring a Christian band leading in worship with praise and contemporary music.

Special Conferences:

*"When God Speaks"*

*"Living In the Spirit"*

*"Journey to One"* written and led by Gwen Williams, a single from New Orleans (known as Ms. Chocolate)

*"The Joyful Journey"* (humor)

Much more, including:

Sunday morning – Vision (a drama team), Biloxi

Sunday journeys and activities

Sunday evening concert by Kindred Heart

Free T-shirts if registered by May 1

Seafood banquet

New Sunday adventures

*Make plans now to attend!*

## YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE • CLINTON

DECEMBER 29-30, 1997



SPEAKER  
Ike Reigard

### WORSHIP MUSIC

Reggie & Lady Love Smith



NEWSONG

IN CONCERT • Monday • 7:45 p.m.



### VENTRILOQUIST

Dennis Lee &  
The Nana  
Puddin' Bunch

Registration begins noon, 29th • Conference concludes 3 p.m., 30th

Ask your youth minister for more details or contact the Evangelism Department, MBCB at 1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800.

## CAMPUS DAYS FOR GAS AND ACTEENS

Blue Mountain College

William Carey College

November 15

January 24

11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

3 p.m.-7 p.m.

Mississippi College

February 21

11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Missionaries • Basketball • Testimonies  
Cheerleaders • Music

Cost \$7.50

(Includes: basketball game, meal, program and limited insurance)

For more information, contact the  
WMU Department at 800/748-1651 or  
968-3800 in Jackson.





## Queen's Court

**Camp Garaywa November 14-15, 1997**

**Friday 5 p.m. - Saturday Lunch**

*For Acteens Involved in StudiAct  
(Queen Level and Above)*

**\$23 per person**

(includes meals, lodging, crafts and limited insurance)

**What to Bring:** sheets or sleeping bag, pillowcases, towels,  
casual clothes, comfortable shoes, Bible,  
paper and pencil, personal items

**Registration Deadline: Friday, November 7, 1997**

Registration Form - Queen's Court

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Association \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Person sending in registration \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x \$23 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to WMU*

*Mail to: WMU - Queen's Court*

**P O Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530**

## 1998 Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir Auditions

### October '97 Choral Auditions

23rd 5-8 p.m. Mount Vernon Baptist Church,  
Columbus

25th 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo

### November '97 Choral Auditions

1st 9 a.m.-noon Baptist Building, Jackson  
3rd 5-8 p.m. Clarksdale Baptist Church, Clarksdale  
8th 10 a.m.-noon First Baptist Church, Ocean Springs  
15th 12-2 p.m. First Baptist Church, Summit  
17th 5-8 p.m. First Baptist Church, Meridian

### November '97 Choral and Orchestral Auditions

20th 5-8 p.m. Thomas Fine Arts Building  
William Carey College, Hattiesburg  
21st 5-8 p.m. Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson  
22nd 12-4 p.m. North Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford

**(NOTE: ALL instrumentalists will be expected to audition vocally.)**

*Who Am I...*



*Through My  
Father's Eyes*

## Women's Enrichment Ministries Awareness Conference

**Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson**

**October 24-25, 1997**

*Enjoy an overnight retreat of spiritual refreshment as you learn  
about ministering to women in your church and  
equipping them for service. Learn about new ministries  
God is doing, led by national and state leaders in  
Women's Ministries.*

*Cost: \$25*

(includes lunch, program  
materials, and insurance)

For more information and a registration form, contact  
Edna M. Ellison, WMU at 800/748-1651 or 601/968-3800.

Registration Form - WEM Conference

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x cost per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to WMU*

*Mail to: WEM Awareness Conference*

**P O Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530**

### November '97 Choral Auditions Continued

24th 5-8 p.m. Parkway Baptist Church, Natchez

.....

### 1998 Rehearsal Camp and Tour June 15-23, 1998

Rehearsal Camp at William Carey College

Register through the Church Music Department two weeks prior to audition.

.....

### • ATTENTION MINISTERS OF MUSIC •

Please encourage all interested youth to attend one of these  
auditions. The experience will be a wonderful opportunity  
for them to grow musically, as well as spiritually, by  
learning to lead others to Christ through song.



## Pray this day for...

October 17-30, 1997

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

*A call to prayer for revival and spiritual awakening.*

*"For years Christians have known that every great awakening is born in a remnant committed to prayer. Countless books call people to pray and emphasize the importance God places on His people's praying...if prayer is so important, why do most Christians and churches do so little of what God deems essential?"*

*-Dr. Larry Thompson, Founder of the Watchman Prayer Ministry*

Poverty Awareness Day (Christian Action Commission Emphasis). There is no substitute for Christian involvement in ministries of hunger and relief. Pray that we will not just seek to feed the poor but also work to treat the causes of their poverty.

Pray for St. George's Baptist Church as they face the resignation of their pastor. This is a serious blow to the work of Grenada Baptists, Winward Islands, as this was the island's only full-time pastor.

For Youth Minister Workshop, Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries. Pray for all the preparations being made for a prayer walk in Niger November 7-15.

For the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Meeting, Baptist Building; Ministers Wives Conference, FBC, Jackson, sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries; and Lay Missions Conference, FBC, Jackson, sponsored by Witness Team.

For Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Committee Meeting, Baptist Building. For State Quartet/Ensemble Festival, FBC, Tupelo, sponsored by Church Music Department. For Chaplaincy Training, Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, sponsored by Missions Extension and Asso. Admin. Department.

For Chaplains Banquet, Baptist Building, sponsored by Missions Extension and Associational Administration, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention (28-29), FBC, Jackson.

The population of Laos is 65% Buddhist and 35% Animist. Pray for God's power to reign supreme over these demonic strongholds.

For Bivo Ministers/Ministers Wives Breakfast, Baptist Building, sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Meeting, Baptist Building.

Pray for a young man who has heard the Good News over the radio in the Middle East and North Africa and has taken some correspondence courses. He is now a believer and reads his New Testament regularly for guidance.

A group of young professionals in the capital city of Jakarta are studying the Indonesian version of Experiencing God. Pray for them as they seek to apply the things they are learning in their daily relationships, especially as they interact with non-Christians in the work place.

For GA Mother/Daughter Overnight; Camp Garaywa, sponsored by the WMU. For State Church Media Library Conference, FBC, Clinton, sponsored by the Department of Broadcast Services. For the Interfaith Witness Associates Training Conference; Southside BC, Jackson, sponsored by the Evangelism Department.

Pray for Mississippi missionaries John and Kathy Vaughn in Brazil in their efforts to establish a new congregation in the Santa Corona neighborhood. Also pray that God will send a Brazilian professional who is Baptist to their city who could help them reach out to the upper class.

Pray for the Singapore Baptist Convention as they seek for a new Executive Director to replace Rev. John Cheng, who is retiring soon.

Pray that Christian workers will be able to communicate clearly the truth of who God is and what He has done in the heart language of the various people groups of Vietnam

## PATTERSON PLACE SPECIAL GIFTS

A church, group, or individual may give specified amounts of money to be used to make major purchases for Patterson Place. A plaque will designate each of these special gifts. They may be given in memory of a person or group. They may be given to honor someone still living.

Should you wish to provide the money needed for such a purchase, you should contact Joan Tyler, 601-765-8831, or P.O. Box 425, Collins, MS 39428-0425, so that she could secure complete information for the plaque which would identify your gift. Please contact her prior to announcing your plans to be sure that the special gift for which you wish to provide money is still available.

**Furnishings for one guest room. . . . . \$4,000**  
**Thirty guest rooms will be built.**

**Fireplace. . . . . \$5,000**

**Piano. . . . . \$5,000**

**Built-in audio-visual system . . . . . \$6,000**

**Lower lobby furniture grouping . . . . . \$6,000**

**Upper lobby furniture grouping . . . . . \$8,000**

**Office equipment, including computer and printer. . . . . \$10,000**

**Screened porch . . . . . \$12,000**

**Furniture for meeting room. . . . . \$15,000**

**A guest room and its furnishings. . . . . \$50,000**  
**Thirty guest rooms will be built.**

# HOUSE TOPS.



## HOMEcomings

**Chunky, Chunky:** Oct. 19; 32nd annual homecoming; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship service, 10:45 a.m.; lunch in family life building, noon; 1:30 p.m. program featuring the Ridgeways; Woodrow Clark, Clinton, former pastor, guest speaker; Wayne Campbell, pastor.

**Zion Hill (Copiah):** Oct. 26; services, 10:45 a.m. and followed by dinner in fellowship hall; Daryl Oster, pastor; Mark

Hamilton, music director.

**Jayess, Jayess:** Oct. 19; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; lunch at noon; singing will begin at 1:30 p.m. featuring the Graves Sisters; Eddie Bates, former pastor, speaker; Lonnie Case, pastor.

**Gooden Lake, Belzoni:** Oct. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., Buddy Hampton of Eunice, La., formerly of Silver City, speaker;

noon meal in fellowship hall; 1:30 p.m. service; evening song service will be The Gospel Messengers of Florence.

**Mt. Carmel, Edinburg:** Oct. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal; afternoon singing featuring Sunrise; James Fancher, former pastor, speaker; Evelyn Dodds, music; Keith Fulton, pastor.

**First, Oloh, Sumrall:** Oct. 19; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; wor-

ship, 11 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall; Scotty Smith, guest speaker; Rick Carter, Hattiesburg, music; Jipper Williford, pastor.

**First, Nicholson:** Oct. 26; services, 11 a.m., followed by a covered dish lunch and afternoon singing; William Oakley, former pastor, guest speaker; Johnny Dossett, music; Danny Nance, pastor.

**McDonald (Leake):** Nov. 2; 9:30 a.m., registration, fellowship; 11 a.m. service; noon meal; 1 p.m. singing featuring Howards.

## REVIVAL DATES

**Calvary, Braxton:** Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by covered dish lunch, and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Mitchell, Pearl, evangelist; Bob Harris music; Jimmie C. Wood, pastor.

**Shiloh (Lafayette):** Oct. 19-22; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Mike Spradlin, president, Mid-America Seminary, evangelist; Mike Morton, music; Ronnie Mayes, interim pastor.

**Hepzibah (Lawrence):** Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by dinner, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Gary Jackson, West Point, evangelist; Ernest Ryals, Hepzibah Church, music; Paul Wilbourn, pastor.

**Trinity, Pearl:** Oct. 19-22; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Charles Burnham, Magee, evangelist; Steve Walker, Pinola, music; Kenny Goff, pastor.

**Mt. Nebo (Newton):** Oct. 26-30; Sunday, 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Bill Freeman and Shane Freeman, evangelists; Kenny Pogue, music.

**Glade, Laurel:** Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon services and 7 p.m.; Fred Williams, evangelist; Jimmy Guthrie, music.

**First, Nicholson:** Oct. 26-29; Sunday, 11 a.m., covered dish lunch, and afternoon singing; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; William Oakley, former pastor, evangelist; Johnny Dossett, music; Danny Nance, pastor.

**Learned, Learned:** Oct. 23-25; 7 p.m. James W. Buie, Westview Church, Jackson, chalk artist, preaching; Sam Mason, music; community supper, 5:30 p.m., Saturday; Sam Mason, pastor.

**Trinity, Pearl:** Oct. 19-22; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Charles Ray Burnham, Mendenhall, evangelist; Steve Walker, Pinola, music; Kenny Goff, pastor.

## Blythe Creek sets 120th anniversary

**Blythe Creek, Mathiston:** 120th anniversary. Oct. 19; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall followed by a gospel singing featuring the Gospelaires Quartet of Pontotoc; Danny Irvin, pastor.

Are your seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an aisle, raised roof & electric step. Call Tri-State Van & Bus Today! 1-800-330-3622 BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS!



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SALES AND RENTALS

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YOUR  
GLORY  
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Don Moen.

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Unleashing purity in praise.

Experiencing God.

"We often sing about the showers of blessings...this recording can only be described as Niagara Falls."

-Kim Noblitt, Music Pastor,  
First Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL



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bookstore.

HOSANNA!  
MUSIC

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## NAMES IN THE NEWS



**First Church, Lucedale**, ordained **James Leland Merck Jr. (Lee)** to the gospel ministry on Sept. 7 in an ordination service at First Church. On program were John Turner, pastor, and the ordination message was given by John Merck, Lee's grandfather. Pictured are Merck, left, and Turner, right.



**Macedonia Church, Meridian**, held a Leader Appreciation Day on Aug. 24 to honor its leaders and give special recognition to Sibyl Harrison (left) for 50 plus years of service as secretary of the Sunday School, and Stella Allen (right) for 45 years as a teacher in Sunday School. Also pictured is Jason Gross, pastor.



**Pittsboro Church, Pittsboro**, ordained **Rick Griffin** to the ministry. Buford Ustry, interim pastor; Jeff Howell, Second Church, Calhoun City; Ira Alley, Macedonia Church, Calhoun City; and Billy Credille, Old Town Church, Bruce, were in charge of the service. Special music was provided by Griffin's children, Charlotte Alton, and Liz. A reception was held following the ordination.

## Revival results

**Midway, Moss Point:** Sept. 8-14; six professions of faith; Don Berger, Hattiesburg, evangelist; Ralph Young, pastor.

**Handsboro, Gulfport:** Sept. 21-24; 17 professions of faith; Larry Taylor, evangelist; Gerald and Cindy Simmons, music; Gregg Thomas, pastor.



**New Zion Church, Crystal Springs**, licensed **Shaun Selman** to the ministry during a morning service in August. Pictured (from left) are Pat Bufkin, interim pastor, and Selman, who is currently minister of youth.

**First Church, Poplarville**, ordained **Rich Smith** to the ministry in a special service on July 20. Smith is a recent graduate of New Orleans Seminary. He is serving as minister of youth at Juniper Grove Church, Poplarville. Bob Rogers, pastor of First Church, preached the ordination sermon. Ray Spence, pastor of Juniper Grove Church, read scripture and prayer.



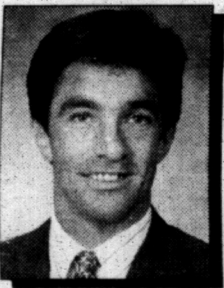
Smith



**New Hope Church, Pontotoc**, recently ordained three new deacons. Pictured (from left) are Winston Ross, pastor; Mike Harville; James Grisham, and Gary Browning.

## STAFF CHANGES

**Clay Chancellor** has resigned his position as staff evangelist/associate pastor of Bethany Church, Prentiss, and is now in full-time evangelism. Chancellor is a graduate of Clarke College and Southwestern Seminary. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 297, Stonewall, MS 39363 or phone (601) 659-7885.



Chancellor

**New Elbethel Church, Lafayette County**, has called **Ronald C. Jenkins Jr.** as pastor. He previously served as pastor of Hopewell Church, Yalobusha Association. Jenkins is presently



Jenkins

studying through the Seminary Extension.

**Center Terrace Church, Canton**, has called **Scott Griffin** of McComb as minister of music and youth effective Sept. 14. Griffin is a student at Mississippi College. He previously pastored at Pheba.

**Calvary Church, Oak Grove Community, Hattiesburg**, has called **Joey Wyatt** as its new minister of music, replacing Richard Davis, who remains at the church in other capacities. Wyatt previously served Military Church near Purvis, in a similar position. Calvary Church has also called a former pastor, **Doug Benedict**, who

returns to the church as minister to senior adults, a newly-created position. Benedict will continue in his duties as director of missions of the Lamar Association.

**Rob Robbins** has recently been called as full-time associate pastor in music/education at First Church, Byram. He has served on staff part-time for a year at Byram and previously was pastor at Lexie Church, Tylertown, and minister of music at Hernando and Monticello churches.

**Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale**, has called **Jeffrey H. Holland** as pastor effective Sept. 28. Holland goes to

**Clarksdale** from Atoka, Okla., where he served as pastor of First Church since 1992. He also previously served as minister of youth/assistant minister of music at Second Avenue Church, Laurel.



Holland

**First Church, Brandon**, has called **Kevin Cooper** as minister of youth/students effective Sept. 28. Cooper is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was

**Petal-Harvey Church, Petal**. Gene Henderson is pastor.

**Clifton Smith** has recently resigned as minister of youth/education at First Church, Richton. He has accepted a new position as minister of youth/education at Mullins Station Church, Memphis, Tenn.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

RATE: 50 cents per word, \$5 minimum. Cash with order except on contract advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads. Only written ads accepted.

**DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS** - Needed for new association in mid-delta of Mississippi. Resumes are being accepted until December 31, 1997. People skills and self-starting a must. This association will consist of 40 churches and missions. Please respond to: Chairman, DOM Search Committee, 2172-Hiway 446, Skene, MS 38730.

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITION** of Associational Missionary for the Genesee Baptist Association Flint, Michigan may be mailed to Chairman, Roy G. Adams 10158 S. State Rd., Goodrich, MI 48438. Include cover with resume. Nominations will be received through December 1, 1997.

**ACCEPTING RESUMES:** Full-time Youth/Children's Director. Will consider Bi-Vocational person. Send to: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 2151 Mt. Zion Rd., Osyka, MS 39657.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



**Fifteenth Avenue Church, Meridian**, recently held its GA Recognition Service. Receiving awards (pictured from left) front row, are Stephanie Travis, Jessica Williams, and Allison Blaine; second row, Anna Kathryn Koch, Emily Goldman, Elya Lamphere, Kelsi Knight, and Nickie Huffman; third row, Baleigh Barham and Blaine Barham. GA leaders are Sharon Barham, Kathy Sinclair, Kristi Watkins, Julie Blaine, and Mev Knight.



right are John L. Sumner, Mangum, and Allan Nix, Jones County director of missions.

**Eastside Church, Pearl**, will sponsor a Lay Renewal weekend on Oct. 17-19. For more information, call the church office at (601) 939-2433.

**First Church, Marks**, will celebrate its 90th birthday on Oct. 26. Gordon Sansing of Forest, former pastor, will preach and Harry Tillary of Meridian, former minister of music, will lead in worship. Dinner on the grounds will follow the 11 a.m. service.

**Oak Grove Church, Lake**, gave \$1,584 to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. Victor R. Vaughn Sr. is pastor.

**Preaching from Ecclesiastes** will be held Oct. 20-24 at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS). Teachers for the academic workshop are Rick W. Byargeon, associate professor



**Faith, Silver Creek**, held note burning services for the pastorum on Aug. 31. Pictured are (left to right) Luke Cliburn, Larry Henderson, Billy Dale Sills, and John L. Jones, pastor.

of Hebrew and Old Testament at NOBTS, and John Talbert, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Northglenn, Colo. Cost is \$99 if taken for Continuing Education Units. To register, contact the Office of Continuing Education, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans

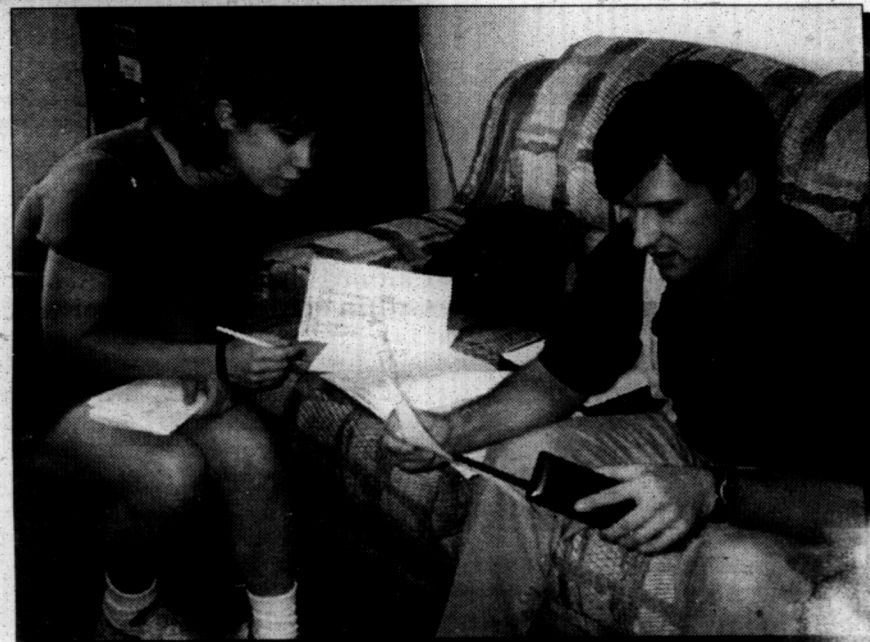
LA 70126, or by phone at (504) 282-4455 or (800) 662-8701, ext. 3260, by fax (504) 286-3573.

**Harmony Church, Crystal Springs**, will host a Hallelujah Festival on Nov. 1, noon-4 p.m. For more information, call Brad at (601) 892-1121.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**Charles Edward "Chid" Lofton** of Brookhaven has been selected as "Alumnus of the Year" for 1997. This is the highest honor that a graduate can receive from Mississippi College (MC) and will be presented during Homecoming festivities scheduled for Nov. 1. While a student at MC, Lofton was a four-year member of the Hermean Literary Society, Baptist Student Union, and band. He graduated with a degree in business in 1950.

**Larry Kennedy**, president of William Carey College, announced key administrative promotions and the appointment of Kyle Jones as director of libraries and learning resources for the college. Cloyd Ezell, a native of Union, assumes the position of vice president of Academic Affairs. B. J. Martin, professor and chair, department of biological sciences was appointed Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities and Sciences, the position vacated by Ezell's promotion.



**Thirty-six William Carey College (WCC) students** and Tim Glaze, director, Baptist Student Union (BSU), will participate in a mission trip Oct. 30-Nov. 8 in Galeana, Mexico. The BSU is working with A Mission of Love, a non-denominational, multicultural ministry founded by Bobby Shurden of Petal. Students will clean and paint an orphanage, provide a children's ministry, distribute food, and assist with medical care. Pictured are two members of the WCC BSU, Rebecca Arthur, of Columbia; and Bill McMullan, of Hattiesburg, contacting students participating in the Mexico Mission of Love trip. Contact Glaze at (601) 582-6386 for more information.

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## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Obeying God's call

Genesis 12:1-9

By Jason Bird

With the introduction of Abram, the Genesis narrative begins a new emphasis.

Formerly, the emphasis has been man's rebellion against God. Now the focus shifts to how God would make those who remain faithful to him a part of his redemptive plan for mankind. God's purpose in choosing Abram and his descendants was to bless all nations through them. Abram's life is a reminder that God uses weak and imperfect vessels to accomplish his purposes.

**The Call From God (12:1-3).** God called Abram to take a giant step of faith. First, God

asked Abram to leave his homeland. Abram had roots in Ur. To leave that land would mean to leave all that

was familiar and close to his heart. Not only did God call Abram to leave, but he also told him to go to the place that he would show him. Notice that God did not give a specific destination or a road map. With the details deliberately omitted, God's call required that Abram trust him for every step of the journey. Likewise, when God calls believers today to be obedient, he does not necessarily give all of the details. A faithful child of God learns to trust God each step of the way, even if he does



Bird

not know the ultimate outcome of the journey.

Six promises accompanied God's call to Abram: 1) Abram's descendants would become a great nation; 2) God would bless Abram; 3) Abram's name would be great; 4) he would be a blessing to others; 5) God would bless those who blessed Abram or curse those who cursed him; and 6) through Abram everyone on earth would be blessed. God promised Abram security, well-being, prominence and usefulness. As you read the story of Abram's life, it is obvious that God kept each of his promises. Ultimately, all the world was blessed by a Savior, Jesus, a descendant of Abram.

**Obedience To God (12:4-6).** Abram demonstrates his great faith in that he took God at his word and left his comfort zone. This great man of faith packed

up everything he had and determined to go wherever God showed him! In doing so, he showed God was more important than anything else in his life.

The great hymn of faith, "Trust and Obey," serves as a reminder that obedience to God depends upon our belief that God will do what is best for us. Abram's forefathers didn't believe that, but he did. Because Abram believed, God blessed him. As you examine your life, do you trust God's heart enough to obey him completely?

**The Promise Of God (12:7a).** When Abram arrived in Canaan, God reappeared to him and reassured him he was not alone in this foreign land. God promised Abram that his offspring would one day receive all of the land he saw. It is interesting to note that Abram never owned any of the land except a small burial plot. Yet, he still remained faithful to God.

God never forgets his children. Even when they have left comfortable surroundings to take a step of faith, God continues to remind them of his presence and his promise. Though he may not keep the promises in the manner or timetable his children expect, God is faithful nonetheless.

**The Worship Of God (12:7b-9).** Abram responded to God's faithfulness by worshipping him. He built altars in a pagan land to honor God's goodness and give visible testimony to his power.

In light of God's faithfulness to keep his promises, believers should always respond to Him with a grateful heart in worship. When we trust God and obey him, he blesses our lives and draws us closer to him. There really is no other way to be happy in Jesus, "but to trust and obey."

Bird is pastor, 15th Avenue Church, Meridian.

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Live responsibly

Daniel 5

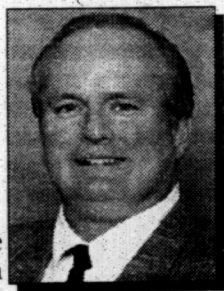
By Wayne VanHorn

The first time I heard the story of the hand writing on the wall was in a Billy Graham crusade in 1974. My initial impression remains: our God is sovereign even over the kings of the earth! We are introduced for the first time to Belshazzar, described as king and as a son of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had raided Jerusalem and had taken sacred vessels from the Temple (1:2). He also took Hebrews into exile in 605, 598 and 586 B.C.

**Proud and Partying (5:1-4).** Our first glimpse of Belshazzar is a king at play. Hosting a feast for a thousand of his nobles, he drinks wine and encourages his

guests to do so. The phrase "When Belshazzar tasted the wine..." in 5:2 is taken to mean "when he felt the effects of the wine."

This proud king added to the festivity by having the gold vessels, that had been taken from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar many years earlier, brought to the banquet hall. Belshazzar, his guests, his wives and concubines drank wine from these sacred vessels (5:2-4). The partying was topped off with a praise service to "the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone" (5:4b). In 5:1-4 the reader is given a portrait of a proud and secure king on top of his world. The picture



VanHorn

here is similar to one that could be painted a thousand times over today. People partying their lives away, secure in themselves, so sure of the future. Belshazzar was in control...or so he thought!

**Scared and Searching (5:5-7).** Daniel 5:5 indicates how fast one's fortunes can be reversed. "Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged..." The hand wrote and the king worried. The king's psychological state is described in terms of physical change. His face grew pale, his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. Additionally, his thoughts alarmed him! (5:6). The once proud and partying king was now shaken and visibly disturbed. He took a course of action which seemed natural but turned out to be ineffective. He consulted his wisemen and counselors, promising a great

reward to the man who interpreted the inscription. The writer provides a wonderful insight into human futility. We spend our lives to obtain things, to enjoy power, and to relish popularity and authority, but power and material things become meaningless in the face of the uncertainties of life. Belshazzar was willing to bestow some wealth, position, and authority on the person who could relieve him of the anxiety caused by the hand and the unknown inscription. When none of his counselors could interpret the inscription, the king's condition worsened (5:8-9).

**Weighed and Wanting (5:25-28).** In 5:10-24, the queen informed Belshazzar of Daniel's keen spirit and wisdom. Daniel agreed to decipher the inscription. Interestingly, before Daniel gives the actual interpretation, he reminds Belshazzar of an incident in Nebuchadnezzar's life. The incident is recorded in Daniel 4 and recounted in

Daniel 5:18-21. Daniel's point was simple. God always exalts the humble and humbles the exalted. Belshazzar should have learned from Nebuchadnezzar's ordeal. Since he did not learn, the hand came writing on the wall. The words are now revealed, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Pharsin," and the interpretation is given. Belshazzar's time as king was limited, he had been found lacking, and his kingdom would be divided between the Medes and Persians. Verses 30-31 give historical confirmation of the accuracy of Daniel's interpretation. Daniel's reward (5:29) was unnecessary for he would have interpreted the writing without such compensation (5:17). Thus Belshazzar's reign and life came to an untimely but just end. We say to this day, "The hand writing is on the wall!" to indicate the beginning of the end.

VanHorn is pastor, First Church, Columbia.

## LIFE AND WORK

### Be reconcilers

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

By Geneva England

Elizabeth Eliot's incredible ministry of reconciliation occurred when she befriended the Aucan Indians of Ecuador who had brutally killed five missionaries, her husband included. Elizabeth, with her young daughter and an Aucan woman risked their lives offering friendship, Christian love, and Christ to this head-shrinking tribe. Through her pioneer efforts, the Aucans today have peace with themselves and outsiders.

Our call to be reconcilers may not be as dramatic nor as successful as Elizabeth's; nonetheless, it is needed in our jungle-like world of hate.

**Motivation (5:11-15).** Paul had zealously fought against

the cause of Christ before his conversion experience on the Damascus Road; afterward, he even more zealously tried to persuade men about the love of Christ who "died for all" (15). He explained that "an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands," (5:1 NIV) awaits believers at death.

Four factors motivated Paul to minister day and night. First, "all" believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards for their good deeds. Second, "all" sinners are dead (v.14) prior to their belief in Christ as Savior and Lord. Third, the "terror of the Lord," (meaning reverential fear and respect) compelled



England

Paul because he didn't want to displease God (v.11). Fourth, the "love of Christ constrained" (v.14) him to work without ceasing.

These same reasons should motivate us. Our heartfelt reply should be, "Yes, Lord, I'll do whatever you want me to do." Everyone can't be a missionary, but God has given us some talent we should use for his glory. For some, being an encourager is their special talent; for others, the voice, the hands, the feet, etc. Whatever talent God gave you should be used enthusiastically for the Lord.

**Message (5:16-19).** Verses 16-19 address reconciliation. To reconcile means "to change" or "to be brought from enmity to friendship with God." Enmity is defined in Romans 8:7 as "The sinful mind is enmity against God." Because sin separates man from God, some provision is necessary for man to

move from Point A (totally sinful) to Point B (totally sinless). This occurred through the cross when Christ "having slain the enmity," created one new man reconciled to God (Eph. 2:15-16). "For by grace are ye saved through faith...not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

**Ministry (5:20-6:2).** Christians are privileged and responsible for sharing the gospel message with the lost. Remember, as a believer, you are the recipient of someone's ministry. Jesus, having purchased through his death, burial, and resurrection salvation for all who believe, sent his messengers into the world — to Jews and Gentiles alike. The first converts became Christ's ambassadors. Ambassadors must possess a minimum of three qualifications: child of God, willingness to serve, and spiritual knowledge. Ambassadors are admonished to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

What a wonderful message to carry: a sinless Savior dying to pay the sinners debt so that they may receive the imputed righteousness of God.

Are you grateful enough for this gift? Have you thanked God for your position in Christ? We so often forget the great sacrifice Christ made for us.

Jesus' greatest commandment is "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength," and his second, "love thy neighbor as thyself." These involve two kinds of reconciliation. First, we must be reconciled to God by having a right standing with him. Second, we must reconcile ourselves with others, living in love and harmony as a demonstration of our love for Christ.

England is a member of First Church, Grenada.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW

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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**AUG. 1, 1997-  
AUG. 31, 1997**

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SEP. 30, 1997**

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God intends  
for all his children to  
live with him forever,  
but the road to everlasting life  
is blocked. To find that road  
you must:

**Admit that you are a sinner.**  
*There is none righteous, not  
even one. (Rom. 3:10)*

**Accept God's love for you.**  
*God demonstrates his own  
love toward us, in that while  
we were yet sinners, Christ  
died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*

**Acknowledge Christ as Lord.**  
*If you confess with your  
mouth Jesus as Lord, and  
believe in your heart that God  
raised him from the dead, you  
shall be saved. (Rom. 10:9)*

If you make a decision for  
Christ today, contact a local  
Mississippi Baptist Church for  
spiritual guidance.

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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CZSV OJ VSMQ BTA  
OPTO THRVOP JX OPVV;  
TAY JX PZB OPTO OTR-  
VOP TGTQ OPQ CIJYH  
THR OPVB AJO ICTZA.

UNRV HZW: OPZMOQ

Clue: Y equals D

Have fun with cryptography and  
exercise your Bible knowledge. A  
King James Version Bible verse has  
been encoded by letter substitution.  
The same letter is substituted  
throughout the puzzle. Solve by  
trial and error. Answer to last  
week's puzzle: Matthew Twenty-Seven.

# Calif.-NAMB efforts yield new ministries

OAKLAND, Calif. (BP) — Residents of Oakland's Telegraph neighborhood celebrated three decades of Southern Baptist ministry in their community at the dedication of a new facility described as a model of missions partnership.

"This is a dream come true," declared Fermin A. Whittaker, executive director of California Southern Baptist Convention, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 3 marked the official opening of the Telegraph Avenue Missions Center.

"Telegraph Center exists to feed the hungry, to clothe those who need clothing and to love those who are unloved," Whittaker said. "Red and yellow, black and white, the rich and the poor — they all need to be loved."

The missions and ministry complex is jointly supported by the California convention and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Additional support comes from area churches as well as a local food bank and various other community organizations.

The modern, two-story building, which housed the Telegraph Avenue Mission Center the past 30 years.

The new facility includes a large multi-purpose room which can be used for a variety of community training programs. Also included are staff offices, a fully equipped kitchen and dining room, and refrigerated storage for the center's food distribution ministry.

In addition, the center serves as a worship center for new Baptist congregations and houses a socialization program for the mentally ill.

Charles Stewart, NAMB director of missions properties, credited the center's director, Paula Dickson, and her husband, Ted, who "dared to dream that we could build it here."

Stewart recalled three years of construction delays, escalating costs and other obstacles that eventually were overcome to bring the project to completion.

He called it "one of the most ambitious



30 AND COUNTING — Paula Dickson (fourth from left), director of Telegraph Avenue Mission Center, and June Tate, a director of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, help cut the ceremonial ribbon at the dedication service marking the official opening of the new two story ministry center in Oakland, California. The center, which marks its 30th anniversary this year, is jointly supported by California Southern Baptist Convention and NAMB. (BP photo by Mark A. Wyatt)

tasks" ever undertaken during his 15 years with NAMB and its predecessor, the Home Mission Board.

"If it was easy, everybody would be doing it," Stewart quipped. "The Lord obviously was in this from the beginning."

Originally expected to cost less than \$400,000, the newly constructed building eventually required more than twice that amount to complete.

Volunteer labor helped keep costs from going even higher.

The center's director expressed gratitude to Southern Baptists for the new center and for the many years they have given "time, money and words of encouragement" to help make the center's ministry possible.

"I wish all the needs could be met, but I

am thankful to the Lord for each one that is met, each life that is touched," Dickson said. She noted the center's new home represents "the beginnings of new opportunities and new challenges to work closely together with churches and organizations in our community and neighborhood."

Dickson pledged to work with Southern Baptists to help meet needs in the community "so the people who walk through these doors can find hope."

"I look upon this (new center) as an investment in the Lord's work in the East Bay," said Larry Fisher, director of missions for East Bay Southern Baptist Association, which includes Oakland.

"From this day on, there is going to be a marked difference in how Southern Baptists are seen in the Bay Area."

## Seminary librarian believes letter cost him his job

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) — The longtime reference librarian at Southern Seminary was fired Sept. 26, apparently because he wrote a personal letter questioning statements made in a chapel address by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Tom Elliff.

Paul Debusman, a 35-year employee of the seminary in Louisville, Ky., was 10 months away from retirement. He was given one month's severance pay and immediately dismissed.

As a result of the "involuntary retirement," Debusman, 64, will lose some retirement benefits he otherwise would have received.

Seminary President Albert Mohler did not return a phone call seeking comment on the firing. Seminary spokesman David Porter said Mohler would not comment because of the confidential legal nature of personnel matters.

According to seminary-produced news reports, Elliff's Sept. 16 chapel address lauded the changes toward conservatism that have occurred at

Southern Seminary under Mohler's administration.

Debusman said in that context Elliff suggested he would not have been invited to speak in chapel under previous moderate administrations.

"At least the tone of what I felt he was saying was that in the former days he would not have been invited," Debusman explained.

That prompted the librarian to write Elliff a personal letter in which he attempted to correct what he perceived as historical inaccuracies in Elliff's comments.

Studying and working at the seminary since the 1950s, Debusman has witnessed the administration of three presidents: Duke McCall, Roy Honeycutt, and Mohler.

"I reminded him that [in the past] we had heard SBC presidents and other ranking members of the Southern Baptist Convention," Debusman said. "Chapel as I remembered it from the '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s was a time when we heard everyone. There was a deliberate strategy to bring in different points of view."

"That's no longer true," Debusman said he pointed out to Elliff. Under the Mohler administration, "some people will not be invited," he explained. "My pastor will not be invited."

Debusman is a longtime member of Crescent Hill Church in Louisville, the Baptist church nearest the seminary.

In the past, the moderate congregation was closely linked with the seminary. In recent years that relationship has faded, as moderate faculty and students were gradually replaced by conservatives during the 1980s.

"The ironic thing to me is I was attempting to be conciliatory," Debusman said. "I'm not naive, and I don't mean to sound Pollyannish. But I closed my letter by saying my heart had been broken since 1979 by the way we had sniped at each other and I would to God that we could unite around the larger mission of sharing the gospel, discipling, and equipping believers."

"Although critical, I was intending to be in my little tiny

way some kind of conciliatory spirit and expressing the fact that I'm brokenhearted because we can't find bigger objectives and unite even through our differences," he added.

Elliff declined to comment on Debusman's letter and firing. "This is, apparently, a matter concerning the personnel policies at Southern Seminary. I have no statement to make," Elliff said in a faxed response to an interview request.

However, Debusman said it was obvious to him that Elliff had communicated with the seminary. Debusman did not receive a personal reply from Elliff until the Monday after he was fired.

Debusman said seminary administrators told him his actions had been "harmful" to the seminary.

Debusman said he was shocked that his writing a personal letter to Elliff would be construed as bringing harm to the seminary.

"I just did not see that a personal letter which I was intending as conciliatory" would be perceived as harmful, he said.